

up messes that the foolish People had got itself into than in terms of community service. As a result, the state apparatus in Britain became to a marked extent isolated from the life of the mass of the people. In this sense the fact that Washington (or Bonn, or Canberra, or Ottawa) could be seen to be an artificial capital had some advantages. In an artificial capital one operates as in a goldfish bowl. In the centre of a great city things are more concealed.

In the last resort, then, I come back to the old adage that no government can be good that does not rest on the consent of the governed. To the extent that political systems fail to secure the consent of the governed they deserve to be met with passive hostility or worse. The basic theme of twentieth-century politics in Britain seems to me to be the search for a basis for popular participation in government that will create mutual confidence between government and governed. So far, this has not been achieved. Governments have for the most part been little more than caretakers. The Whig constitution that the twentieth century inherited from the eighteenth has proved adaptable enough to prevent trouble, but not to prevent widespread malaise. One way out would clearly be to take the radical step of recognising that the state apparatus is no longer of a size readily manageable by politicians and to create a system of administrative law with which to regulate it. That would leave the politicians freer to talk about issues and to discover just what it is that the people need. Pelling is clearly right to stress that there has been hostility between the workers and constituted authority. I would extend his argument to make it into a general proposition about the structure of government in Britain.

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SIDNEY POLLARD and DAVID W. CROSSLEY. — *The Wealth of Britain, 1085-1966*. New York: Schocken Books, 1969. 303 pp.

The authors of this book set themselves a considerable group of tasks, replete with difficulties and dangers which they openly acknowledge. Their avowed intentions are to study the wealth of Britain over eight centuries, what "wealth" in each age consisted of, and how it was shared out. The challenges are squarely faced, and are met with sensible and sensitive judgements, though social historians may regret that consumption, and its social distribution, receive rather less attention than production, particularly in the early chapters where this work most nearly approaches traditional economic history. Nevertheless social historians will find this a productive and rewarding quarry.

The virtues of the book are considerable. It is, for example, a splendid synthesis of recent work in this field. Thickly strewn footnotes and a twenty-three page select bibliography supply abundant guidance to further reading, much of it published in the last ten years. There are few obvious omissions, though the section on agriculture in the eighteenth and early nineteenth

centuries curiously lacks reference to J. D. Chambers and G. E. Mingay's *The Agricultural Revolution, 1750-1880*, produced by the same publishers in the same series some two to three years earlier; and that on living standards in the same period neglects, no less curiously, E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*. Secondly, the book rises occasionally above mere synthesis: in the medieval and early modern sections where, for example, archaeological evidence is illuminatingly used, and in the modern chapters where statistical materials are juggled to produce some novel, though never earth-shattering, conclusions. All in all, the virtues of the book are compounded of these two elements, and it must be considered the best one-volume introduction to recent work on the economic history of England over this long period of time.

Much depends in a work of this sort, which sets out to pursue comparisons through and over time, on the choice of a suitable chronological framework, and here a number of criticisms can be made. The framework for the early centuries and opening chapters, is established by demographic behaviour. Thus the first chapter traces the economic development of England in the period of rising population, 1085-1315, after first surveying all too briefly the evidence which can be derived from the Domesday returns. The second chapter traces developments in the subsequent period, 1315-1500, when population pressure was greatly relieved. Population expansion supplies the *motif* in the third chapter, covering the years 1500 to 1600, and its absence figures largely in the analysis of the fourth (1600-89). The choice of this theme is sensible since no other single factor is likely to have played as important a part in determining the path of both national wealth and its social distribution in this agricultural society, but the choice of date limits for the third and fourth chapters appears rather idiosyncratic. In many ways the traditional Tudor — early Stuart periodisation (1485-1641) would have been a happier choice for the third chapter since population expansion went on into the early seventeenth century, petering out in most areas between 1620 and 1640. As it is, the choice of 1600 as a dividing line makes long-run comparisons (of, say, the economic response to population pressure) more difficult, and creates problems in the fourth chapter where the authors acknowledge that "the period [1600-1689] can be divided between the first 40 years of the century, when rising population still made for land shortage and rising product prices, and the second 50 years, when this problem was rather different". The choice of 1600 can only be justified if there were developments around this time which outweighed the demographic ones in importance, and the analysis seems to rest on the assumption that a burgeoning overseas trade supplies such developments. But overseas trade was far from buoyant in the first thirty to forty years of the seventeenth century, as the authors themselves point out (pp. 144-5). The great expansion of English overseas trade properly belongs to the period after 1640.

Many of these difficulties appear to have arisen from the decision to divide the fourth and fifth chapters (and the overall responsibilities of authorship?) at 1688, when Gregory King's exercises in political arithmetic and Phyllis Deane and W. A. Cole's recent statistical labours both originate, and make possible a more recognizably modern approach to questions concerning wealth and income. If, therefore, the third chapter had been ended at the analytically more meaningful year of 1640, instead of 1600, this would have made the limits of the fourth chapter 1640-89, an absurdly short-period in comparison with the earlier ones, and a period of little economic or social distinctiveness. As it is, the fifth chapter, covering the years 1689-1760, traces developments which could more happily have been pursued in the context of the years 1640-1760.

With 1760, and chapter six, we are back on a familiar path, the flight path leading to the Industrial Revolution, when for probably the first time population growth was accompanied by increasing output per head, though no great and immediate increases in consumption. Thereafter consecutive chapters chart changes in production and consumption during "The Triumph of Industrialism, 1815-73", "The Hey-day of Empire, 1873-1914" and "The last Half-Century, 1914-1966". The weighting of the whole book is curious, though possibly justifiable. The first four chapters which carry the story down to 1688 take up 152 pages; post-1688 developments receive only 120 pages. Such a weighting can be justified by the availability of an increasing volume of statistical materials as one approaches modern times. In the pre-statistical period the approach is necessarily more indirect and satisfaction to problems more elusive. Even so, twentieth century developments deserve more than the twenty-five pages allotted to them, and the solid statistical diet of the later chapters could well have been leavened by greater use of individual case histories, memoirs and contemporary materials.

Finally, a criticism familiar to those who insist on including "Britain" in their titles. This is really a work about England: Wales and Scotland are almost ignored.

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